
SENATE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Senator Anna Caballero, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular Session

AB 500 (Quirk-Silva) - University of California: admissions changes

Version: June 23, 2025

Urgency: No

Hearing Date: August 18, 2025

Policy Vote: ED. 6 - 0

Mandate: No

Consultant: Lenin Del Castillo

Bill Summary: This bill requests the University of California (UC) to undertake certain actions before a proposal to change the conditions for undergraduate admissions is adopted by the UC Regents, and provides the procedural requirements for the UC to follow before considering and voting on such a proposal.

Fiscal Impact: The UC estimates General Fund costs of \$50,000 each year to track, process, and issue the notifications required pursuant to this bill.

Background: The California Constitution establishes the UC as a public trust administered by the UC Regents and endows the Regents with full powers of organization and government. It specifies that the UC is only beholden to legislative control as necessary to ensure the security of funds, compliance with the terms of the endowments of the university, and competitive bidding procedures where applicable to the university by statute for construction contracts, sales of property, and purchasing of materials, goods and services. It also provides that the UC is to be entirely independent of all political or sectarian influence and kept free in the appointment of its Regents and in the administration of the UC's affairs.

Existing law states it is the intent of the Legislature for the academic standards for a high school course to meet the model uniform set of standards for admission to the CSU and UC (A-G course criteria) to align with the standards developed by the Academic Content Standards Commission in 2010 and adopted by the SBE. The law requires the CSU and requests the UC to do the following:

1. Establish a model uniform set of standards for high school courses (A-G course criteria) for the purpose of determining eligibility for admission to undergraduate programs offered by the UC and CSU;
2. When developing the A-G course criteria, the faculty of the CSU and UC may work in consultation with administrators and faculty from K-12 schools. Requires K-12 schools who are consulted to establish advisory boards with specified membership, including parents, classroom teachers in career technical education (CTE), business and industry representatives, to provide additional input;
3. Develop and implement a process for approving high school courses meeting the A-G course criteria by January 1, 2006. The courses will be approved by August 1 of each school year and a notification will be provided to the high school of the approval or denial of the course as meeting the A-G course criteria;

4. Develop a procedure to evaluate a high school career education course as meeting the A-G course criteria, as defined;
5. Take into consideration any previous work conducted to approve a high school course as meeting the A-G course criteria; and
6. Develop guidelines for high school computer courses to be approved as meeting the A-G course criteria.

Proposed Law: This bill requests the UC, before a proposal regarding a change to conditions for undergraduate admissions is adopted by the Regents, to complete all of the following:

1. Provide the proposal to the official student organization representing the UC student body, the SBE, and the CSU Trustees for consideration.
2. Provide to each UC Regent notification of the UC Regents meeting at which the proposal is to be considered and information and materials regarding the proposal, including on the impact on local educational agencies (LEA), the UC, and the CSU, in advance of the meeting at which the proposal is to be considered.
3. Provide to the public a meeting notice regarding the UC Regents' intent to vote on the proposal pursuant to the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act and before the open session begins, ensure that the proposal has been made available to the public present at the session where it will be considered for adoption.
4. Adopt the proposal by majority vote of the UC Regents through the making of a motion. The bill clarifies that a full discussion, in open session, of the contents of the motion or the reason why the proposal should or should not be adopted is not prohibited.

This bill requires, upon receiving the proposal from UC, the SBE and the CSU Trustees to identify as an item for discussion and discuss the proposal at an open meeting of each of the these boards, respectively.

Related Legislation: AB 684 (Patel) subjects the UC Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) meetings to the Bagley-Keene Open Meetings Act. AB 684 was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1217 (Fong, 2025) requests the UC to align its admission criteria used for high school course certification with the content standards, frameworks, and model curriculum adopted by the SBE and updates the existing course certification process. AB 1217 was held on the Suspense File in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

AB 1215 (Boerner Horvath, 2021) would have requested the UC Board of Regents to adopt policies directing the UC Office of the President to establish various systemwide protocols pertaining to undergraduate admissions. AB 1215 was vetoed by Governor Newsom whose veto message read in part:

I am committed to ensuring the fairness of admissions processes at all California colleges and universities, which is why I signed previous legislation with that goal in mind. However, I believe that the system-wide requirements stipulated in this bill could constrain the UC's ability to effectively use its holistic admissions process in admitting diverse cohorts of new students.

“Moreover, I believe that the UC has addressed the majority of issues identified by the State Auditor with the seriousness they deserve and has already implemented many of the safeguards required by this bill. In light of the UC's ongoing implementation of audit recommendations, this bill is premature.

“I will continue to monitor this issue and expect that the UC follows through on these new procedures.

Staff Comments: The Board of Admissions and Relations with Schools (BOARS) is a committee of the UC Academic Senate that oversees all matters relating to UC admissions of undergraduate students. The BOARS regulates the policies and practices used in the admissions process that directly relates to the educational mission of the University. It also recommends and directs efforts to improve the admissions process. The setting of eligibility standards as well as defining A-G requirements are among its duties.

According to the author, “AB 500 seeks to address the lack of transparency and stakeholder input in changes to undergraduate admissions criteria at the University of California (UC). Currently, UC can modify its admissions policies without external review or consultation, which has led to abrupt and unclear changes, such as the recent removal of data science as an alternative to Algebra II. These changes have disproportionately impacted students from under-resourced schools who may already face limited access to required coursework. Without structured oversight, midstream shifts can create barriers to higher education for students statewide, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.”

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